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Special points of interest:

- *Girl Talk Mentors win RAY of Hope Award*
- *Massachusetts Walk & Bike to School Day*
- *JGMS After School Program - Spring 2016*
- *Youth and Family Services Committee 2015-2016*
- *Job Match*
- *Safe Homes*
- *Are you a Binge Drinker?*
- *Is Alcohol Safe?*
- *Youth and Family Services Donors*
- *Better Ensure School Success*
- *Basic Internet Safety*
- *Social Networking Tips for Parents*
- *National Alcohol Screening Day Event*
- *Bedford Veterans Hours*

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Girl Talk Mentors Receive RAY of Hope Award

Girl Talk is a peer-to-peer mentoring after school program at John Glenn Middle School (JGMS) that offers positive weekly meetings for middle school girls. Girl Talk is led by high school students - currently Erin Venuti, Lauren Granada, Sophia Kyrrou, Sarah Rogalski, Mary Manning, and Amanda Bell - who serve as mentors and through mentoring, help middle school girls develop key leadership skills they will use throughout their life. JGMS faculty advisors Wendy Tanahashi-Works and Kristin Gibbons are present at every weekly meeting. This group of girls was recently honored with being nominated for and winning

the 2015 RAY of Hope Program (**R**ecognize **A** **Y**outh) award.

Initiated in 2011 by Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) and the Bedford Chamber of Commerce (BCOC) and modeled after a similar program in Needham, the RAY of Hope Program (**R**ecognize **A** **Y**outh) is designed to identify high school age young people who have performed outstanding service to the Bedford community and/or who by their actions are excellent role models for their peers. The RAY of Hope Program is a recognition that young people and

their development are of critical importance to the functioning of the Bedford community and our collective futures.

These Girl Talk mentors by their very nature are excellent role models for the JGMS students and each other. They work together to create activities that target healthy eating and body image, social pressures at school, friendship dilemmas, harassment and bullying, and community service or giving back. This

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Walk/Bike to School Day in May and Every Day!

Massachusetts Walk & Bike to School Day is Wednesday, May 4! Families who wish to participate can check out their school newsletter or the Facebook page "Healthy Bedford" for details on how they can get involved. Although the walking and biking events are fun and meaningful, it is important to emphasize that one of the primary goals of our partnership with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is to increase student's physical activity and reduce vehicular traffic around the schools on a regular basis. For many families, walking and/or biking can be an option on non-event days as well.

Bedford, along with hundreds of other schools in Massachusetts, has partnered with Safe Routes to School for many reasons.

Teachers and principals would like children to walk to school so that they arrive alert and ready to learn. School and law enforcement officials would like to reduce the congestion and safety risks posed by so many cars dropping off and picking up children at our schools each day. Public health officials want to reverse the alarming trends of childhood obesity and growing numbers of students not meeting minimum fitness standards. Walking and bicycling to and from school are ways to not only address these issues but also to nurture our children's independence and to increase their "traveler skills set," all while helping to establish healthy lifetime habits.

Recently the Massachusetts Department of Transportation,

MassDOT, notified the Town of Bedford that we have been approved for funding under their Safe Routes to School Program for improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access to the John Glenn Middle School from Great Road via the Bedford High School lot. Currently we are in the design stage of the project. Information on the project can be found here: www.bedfordma.gov/sites/bedfordma/files/u133/srts_bedford_jgms_dph_021116.pdf

For more information on Safe Routes see: www.commute.com/safe-routes-to-school/about or <http://www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford/pages/safe-routes-to-school> or contact Carla Olson: healthybedford@bedfordma.gov

JGMS After School Program Spring 2016

**GIRL TALK
BABYSITTER
TRAINING
ADVANCED VIDEO
PRODUCTION
SHOOTING &
EDITING FOR TV**

Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) in collaboration with John Glenn Middle School (JGMS) is gearing up for another successful Spring After School program with a focus on the most popular activities including Babysitter Training with Maureen McDermott, Girl Talk with advisors Wendy Tanahashi-Works

and Kristin Gibbons, Shooting and Editing for TV and Advanced Video Production with Greg Dolan and Brian Dorrington.

Activities begin the week of April 11th and the registration deadline for all programs is Friday, March 25th. Space is limited; be sure to sign up as soon as possible to

secure your spot. Flyers are available in our office and at the JGMS Main Office. Feel free to call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 x 262 or email jessicaw@bedfordma.gov with any questions or concerns.



2015-2016 Youth and Family Services Committee:

Tom Pinney, Chair ♦ Alison Malkin, at Large ♦ Peter Ricci, at Large ♦ Marcia Morgan, at Large
Caroline Fedele, Selectman Liaison & Recreation Liaison ♦ Jeff Wardwell, Police
Dan Brosgol, School Committee ♦ Caroline Donnelly, Board of Health Liaison

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Job Match - Applications online or at BYFS Office

Students from middle and high school interested in working at jobs such as child care, yard work, snow shoveling or odd jobs may find a great job match with Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS).

Young people may have an after school commitment to sports, music, or other activity may not be able to work in the stores or private industry.

Youth ages 13-18 may register with Job Match. While some

youth may be inexperienced, many others are not. The younger youth want a little extra spending money and this opportunity gives them practice for the world of work to come. The older youth may not want to get locked into a steady job and would enjoy the flexibility of being associated with BYFS and a resident in need of help.

Once the paperwork is completed, BYFS matches the student with an available job. We give the residents who call us the names of a few students to call that we

know are capable of performing this particular job given the youth's age and skills. The resident and the youth negotiate the rate of pay, depending on the job.

Odd jobs in the last year have included helping out at home



parties, light office work, and watering a garden while residents are away.

Applications for teens can be downloaded at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under Job Match or pick one up at our Town Center office.

Residents with a job can call Fran Stander at our office at 781/275-7727 or email at frans@bedfordma.gov

Sign Up for Bedford's SAFE HOMES

The Safe Homes Program is a support network for Bedford parents with children in grades 6-12 who are concerned about alcohol and drug use at pre-teen and teen parties and gatherings. Families who join

provide a safe and supervised home for teen parties. You can sign up online for Safe Homes by going to our website www.bedfordma.gov/youth

Participating families will

receive a directory booklet containing contact information of others who have joined.

For more information or questions about the Safe Homes Program please call Prevention



Services Coordinator Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727 ext. 262

RAY of Hope Award

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year the Girl Talk group went on field trips such as the Empowering Girls Conference sponsored by the Middlesex Partnerships for Youth and District Attorney Marian Ryan, a scavenger hunt at the Burlington Mall as part of marketing and body image awareness, and to the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Community service initiatives have included making muffins for a homeless shelter in Boston, a bake sale to gather funds to donate to

Angel Memorial animal hospital, making Valentines for the seniors at Carlton Willard, and making valentine centerpieces for the Thursday Community dinner in Bedford.

The high school Girl Talk mentors have spoken about giving back to community and how it has changed their lives, and this has really sparked excitement and true interest in the young middle school girls. The mentors have been instrumental as well in helping the younger girls

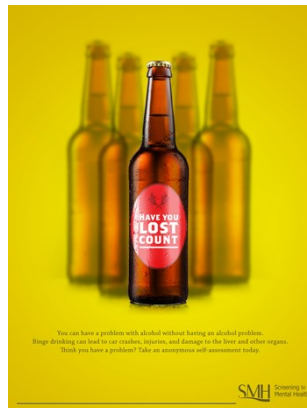
understand how to navigate their middle school years, sharing vignettes from their own years at JGMS. Most importantly, the mentors have helped the younger girls see how supportive and encouraging girls can be to one another, a sisterhood of empowerment.

It is truly fitting that these Girl Talk Mentors were honored with the RAY of Hope award. Congratulations again to Erin, Lauren, Sophia, Sarah, Mary, and Amanda!

Are You a Binge Drinker?

When people hear binge drinking, they often think about college students. However, binge and excessive drinking is a big problem among working age adults. In fact, three out of four alcohol poisoning deaths are among people between the ages of 35 and 64.

In a culture that normalizes drinking and continuously bombards us with images showing



alcohol only associated with fun, it can seem like everyone is out drinking a lot. The reality is that drinking is a problem for many adults. If you think that your drinking may be a problem in your life, visit www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the "screenings" section to find out if your symptoms are consistent with an alcohol use problem and where you can get help.

Alcohol is Legal but is it Safe?

For better or worse, alcohol is a major part of American culture. Celebrating a milestone? Have a drink. Meeting a friend you haven't seen in a while? Grab a glass of wine. But what about when alcohol creates a problem in someone's life? Drinking is so common, it can be difficult for people to know where to draw the line.

Some indications that your alcohol use may be a problem include:

- Drinking more than you planned
- Finding yourself craving a drink
- Wishing you could cut down, but not able to do so

- Facing problems that are a result of your alcohol intake

You can visit www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the 'screenings' section to see if alcohol use is a problem in your life. After taking the anonymous self-assessment, you will find local resources that can help.

Thank you to our Donors:

American Legion
Women's Auxiliary

Anonymous (4)

Bedford Motel

Bedford Post Office
Employees

Bedford Schools
Administration
Employees

Callahan's Kenpo
Karate

Cambridge Savings
Bank

Carleton Willard
Village Resident's
Association

Carriage House

Doubletree Bedford
Glen

First Parish in Bedford
Social Responsibility
Council

Flatbread Company

Michael & Lea Ann
Knight

Mettler Toledo

Millipore Corporation

Moison Ace Hardware
of Bedford

O'Malley and
Colangeli CPA's

Staples

VFW Post 1628

Whole Foods

&

The Residents of
Bedford through
your Taxes

Look for our Fall newsletter for more news!

Better Ensure School Success

How can you ensure your child heads off to school each day with the best possible foundation? Studies show higher test scores for students who live in homes where predictable routines and healthy habits are encouraged. These routines and habits include the following:

1. **Choose a bedtime that will give your child plenty of sleep.** It is recommended that adults get an average of eight hours of sleep per night, but kids need more. For example, a 5-year-old needs about 12 hours per night, a 10-year-old needs about 10 hours per night, and by the time children are in their teenage years, they need approximately nine hours per night. (<https://sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need>) When sleep-deprived children are in class, they may have trouble paying attention due to difficulty focusing. Students can miss important verbal lessons due to inattention or they may be unable to complete tasks in the classroom. Also, children form their memories best while sleeping. Children who sleep well at night will remember the previous day's lessons better than children who are sleep deprived.
2. **Start each day with a balanced breakfast.** Children's bodies and developing brains need healthy nutrition to grow. Start the day off right by providing a healthy breakfast that includes protein, fruit, and whole grains. A balanced breakfast will more likely ensure students feeling satisfied until lunch so they can focus on academic and social skills while at school. Include foods such as whole grain toast or oatmeal, fruits like berries, bananas and apples, and protein-rich options like eggs, yogurt, and milk. Skipping breakfast can leave your child feeling sluggish and irritable and may even promote nausea and headaches. Some studies have shown that routinely skipping meals can lead to obesity because children will seek more calories later in the day.
3. **Make time for exercise.** Your child gets some exercise at school during physical education and recess, but it's important to include exercise and play outside of school as well. Exercise not only helps kids maintain a healthy weight and encourages muscle and bone strength but also helps children burn excess energy so they can sleep better. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 60 minutes of moderate physical activity for children daily. Walking or biking to school is one way to help meet these activity requirements. For ideas on walking or biking routes to school visit:

www.bedfordma.gov/bedford-in-motion/pages/student-sidewalks-and-trails

Basic Internet Safety



When dealing with the Internet, parents need to monitor differently and update their parenting skills. There are three things parents can do to become more familiar with the technologies their teens are using:

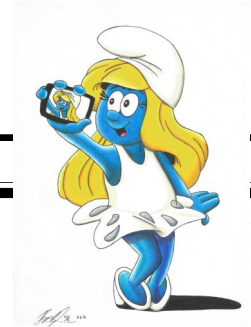
- **Do Your Homework:** Check out the popular teen sites like Facebook and YouTube. See for yourself the kinds of images and information teens can find.
- **Set Rules and Consequences:** Be explicit about the behaviors and activities that are acceptable in your family and set rules to establish when and how new technologies can be used; and

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Basic Internet Safety Cont'd

- **Monitor Your Teens:** Know who your teen's friends are and where they go, on and offline. Check your computer's browser history and downloads, cell phone text messages, and incoming/outgoing phone numbers.

For more information about how to monitor your teen's technology habits visit www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.com/prevention or www.connectsafely.org which outlines what parents need to know about social networking.



Facebook

Social Networking Tips for Parents

Instagram

The internet is an extraordinary resource and gives our children access to a world of information, experiences and ideas. Just as you have taught your child basic safety rules for the physical world, you should also teach your child basic safety rules for the virtual world.

- **Get comfortable with the internet yourself and visit the sites your child uses such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, VSCO, etc.**
- **Be reasonable** and try to set reasonable expectations. Pulling the plug on your child's internet activities is rarely a good first response to a problem - it's easy for them to "go underground" and establish free messaging and social networking accounts at a friend's house or other places.
- **Be open with your teens** encouraging them to come to you if they encounter a problem online - cultivate communication and trust because no rules, laws or filtering software can replace you as their first line of defense. Teaching your kids to be critical thinkers about their safety will pay dividends for years to come.
- **Talk with your kids** about how they use the services. Make sure they understand basic internet and social-networking safety guidelines. These include protecting privacy (including passwords), never posting personally identifying information, avoiding in-person meetings with people they meet online and not posting inappropriate or potentially embarrassing photos. Suggest that they use the services' privacy tools to share information only with people they know from the real world and never admit "friends" to their pages unless they are certain who they are.
- **Consider requiring that all online activity take place in a central area of the home.** There are ways kids can access the internet away from home, including on some mobile phones and game players.
- **Encourage your kids to share their blogs or online profiles** with you. They can have multiple accounts on multiple services. Use search engines and search tools on social-networking sites to search for your child's full name, phone number and other identifying information. If you don't know how to do this, ask for help.
- **Remind your children that once something is posted on the internet, it can not be retrieved.** Colleges, future employers and the police can access their profiles forever.



Adapted from "The Internet, Your Child and You," Office of Massachusetts Attorney General and BlogSafety.com, 2006

National Alcohol Screening Day Event Encourages Free and Anonymous Self-Assessments at www.bedfordma.gov/youth

Bedford, MA— On Saturday, April 9, **Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS)** will participate in National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD), an educational program provided through the national nonprofit, Screening for Mental Health. The initiative raises awareness about alcohol use disorders and helps individuals with alcohol problems find opportunities for assessment and treatment.

Thousands of community-based organizations, colleges, and military installations provide the program to the public each year. To help direct members of the community to appropriate care, **Bedford Youth and Family Services** is providing online screenings at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the “screenings” section of their webpage. The screening is free and anonymous, and provides a comfortable and private way for individuals to assess their drinking habits. While the screening is not diagnostic, it will indicate existing symptoms and if further assessment by a clinician is advisable.

Alcohol abuse can often occur with other mental health issues and can exacerbate the symptoms of illnesses such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Alcohol is often used to “medicate” these disorders but, being a depressant itself, it can make the problem worse.

“Drinking is such a widely accepted part of our culture that it can be difficult for people to realize when alcohol is causing a problem in their lives, says **BYFS Director Sue Baldauf** “National Alcohol Screening Day is a chance for anyone to take a free and anonymous self-assessment in the privacy of their own home.” Screening events will be held across the country on April 9. The screening site, www.HowDoYouScore.org provides a full listing of participating organizations.

Bedford Youth and Family Services is a town department striving to improve family development and lifestyle health by providing

resources and referral, supportive counseling, community education, and youth empowerment and support. With offices centrally located in the Town Center building, BYFS is open weekdays during municipal business hours with some extended hours for counseling appointments. They can be reached by phone at 781/275-7727.

About Screening for Mental Health

Screening for Mental Health, Inc. (SMH), the pioneer of large-scale mental health screening for the public, provides innovative mental health and substance abuse resources, linking those in need with quality treatment options. SMH programs, offered online and in-person, educate, raise awareness, and screen individuals for common mental health disorders and suicide. Thousands of organizations worldwide including hospitals, military installations, colleges, secondary schools, and corporations utilize our educational and screening programs, and in turn, have reached millions of people ranging from teenagers to adults. For more information about Screening for Mental Health, visit www.mentalhealthscreening.org



BYFS Staff Queries - Main Number: 781/275-7727

Sue Baldauf, Director, x263 - Counseling referrals or questions ~ General dept. questions ~ Community concern ~ Issue related to Violence Prevention Coalition, Bedford Community Partnership, Business Diversity Training, Progress Fund ~ Parenting Education Topic

Fran Stander, Administrative Assistant, x264 - General questions ~ General community & Resources ~ Job Match ~ Events & Press Releases ~ New Resident Packets ~ Volunteer Opportunities

Jessica Wildfong, Youth Development/Prevention, x262 - JGMS After School ~ Peer Mentoring ~ Youth Website ~ Other youth related issues - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug education ~ Diversion ~ Youth Risk Behavior Survey ~ Safe Homes ~ Fuel Assistance

Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford Coordinator, x260 ~ Safe Routes to School

Bill Linnehan, Veterans Agents, 781/275-1328 - Any veterans related question

Eliot Counselors: 781/275-7727 Sarah Halloway X261, 978-369-1113 Kristen Herlihy x115, Holly Boker x134

Veterans Agent Hours

Veterans District Office is located in Lexington in the Human Services Department and hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30

p.m. Veterans services are available in Bedford at Town Center, room 210, by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to

4:30 p.m. Direct phone is 781/275-1328.

Bedford Town Center is the yellow building directly behind Bedford Town Hall.

